

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Career Enhancement

Number: 413.6

Date: 7/17/91

Originating Office: Personnel Division
Personnel Policy & Systems Branch

This Replaces: 413.6, 4/27/81 and MANUAL 413.6, 4/27/81

Distribution: Headquarters, Areas, and Locations

This DIRECTIVE contains the guidance for the ARS Career Enhancement Program (formerly referred to as Upward Mobility). The Career Enhancement Program is established to provide training, education and job opportunities for those USDA employees whose current assignments do not provide for advancement beyond GS-10 or equivalent.

Table of Contents

1. REFERENCES	4
2. ABBREVIATIONS	4
3. FORMS	4
4. DEFINITIONS	4
5. OBJECTIVES	5
6. AUTHORITIES	5
7. POLICY	6
8. ELIGIBILITY	6
9. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	6
Vacancy Advertising	6
Vacancy Announcements	6
Application Procedures	7
Evaluation Process	7
Selections	8
Training	8
Performance Appraisal	9
10. RESPONSIBILITIES	9
Personnel Division	9
EEO Staff	9
Supervisors and Management Officials	9
Employees	10
11. PROCEDURES	10
Exhibit 1	13

Exhibit 2	15
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1. REFERENCES

For ARS Merit Promotion Plan, see DIRECTIVE 420.1 and MANUAL 420.1.

For training policies, requirements, and procedures see DIRECTIVE 440.1.

For Qualification Standards, see X-118 or X-118C.

2. ABBREVIATIONS

- CEP - Career Enhancement Program
- DPM - Department Personnel Manual
- EEO - Equal Employment Opportunity
- FPM - Federal Personnel Manual
- ITP - Individual Training Plan
- KSA - Knowledge, Skill and Ability
- NSB - National Services Branch, PD
- PD - Personnel Division
- POB - Personnel Operations Branch, PD
- USC - United States Code

3. FORMS

- ARS-367 - Promotion Certificate
- ARS-368 - Promotion Documentation
- ARS-634 - Individual Training Plan (Local Reproduction)
- AD-411 - Vacancy Announcement
- AD-435 - Performance Appraisal
- SF-52 - Request for Personnel Action
- SF-171 - Application for Federal Employment

4. DEFINITIONS

Career Enhancement is a systematic management effort that focuses Federal personnel policy and practice on the development and implementation of specific career opportunities for employees who are in positions or occupational series which do not enable them to realize their full work potential.

Undertrained are employees currently in occupational areas that are "dead-ended." For example, the highest grade attainable is GS-10, and the employee does not possess the required experience as established by the X-118 to compete for selection to occupational areas which would permit him/her to progress beyond GS-10 or equivalent.

Underutilized are employees who basically meet X-118 or X-118C for higher graded positions, but are presently holding positions which do not fully utilize their knowledge, skills and abilities.

5. OBJECTIVES

ARS' objectives in identifying and providing Career Enhancement opportunities are:

- To provide career enhancement and/or lateral reassignments for employees whose current assignments do not provide for further advancement.
- To obtain more effective use of the capabilities of employees.
- To provide employees with opportunities to enhance their qualifications for progression in career positions.
- To motivate employees and create a climate conducive to promoting and achieving an increase in productivity.
- To prepare the trainee to function effectively in the targeted position.
- To provide a broader base for selection of personnel for the targeted occupational series and thus diversify the employee population in those areas.

6. AUTHORITIES

- Public Law 86-507, July 7, 1958 (5 USC 41)
- Public Law 92-261, March 24, 1972
- Public Law 95-454, October 13, 1978
- Executive Order 11478, as amended, August 8, 1969
- FPM/DPM Chapter 335
- FPM/DPM Chapter 410
- FPM/DPM Chapter 536

- FPM Chapter 338
- DPM Chapter 413
- USDA Multi-Year Program Plan

7. POLICY

It is ARS policy to use the Career Enhancement Program as an available staffing tool to provide realistic opportunities for undertrained and underutilized employees to attain their employment potential and to provide ARS an additional means to achieve greater use of all employees.

Merit principles must be applied in announcing, evaluating, and selecting Program participants. Selections will be made without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or political or personal favoritism.

8. ELIGIBILITY

Employees in a single-grade interval series GS-1 through GS-10 or equivalent with at least 90 calendar days of continuous service within USDA are eligible. Employees must be on one of the following types of appointment:

- Career or career conditional.
- Disabled employees appointed by Schedule A authorities.
- Veterans appointed under the Veterans Readjustment Authority.

9. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Vacancy Advertising.

When a supervisor makes the decision to announce a vacant position under the CEP, in addition to the usual required actions for advertising a vacancy under the Merit Promotion Program, care should be taken to include:

- A designation on the SF-52 that the position should be filled through the CEP.
- A position description for the entry and the target positions.

Supervisors should ensure that a job analysis which identifies those KSA's necessary for successful performance in the target position is done. Complete ARS-368 in accordance with MANUAL 420.1.

Vacancy Announcements. See Exhibit 1 for a sample AD-411.

- CEP vacancies will be announced in accordance with the Merit Promotion DIRECTIVE and MANUAL 420.1.
- In addition to Merit Promotion requirements, vacancy announcements must clearly state:
 - The position is being filled through CEP.
 - The entry and target positions or specific training opportunity.
 - Eligibility requirements including the provision that employees do not need to meet the X-118 or the X-118C qualification requirements.
 - All competitively selected Career Enhancement trainees requiring position/grade changes for developmental purposes, if otherwise entitled, will be authorized salary retention.
 - ITPs must be developed, monitored, and successfully completed by each selected candidate.

Application Procedures.

Employees applying for CEP opportunities must submit and postmark the following by the closing date identified on the vacancy announcement:

- Updated and signed SF-171.
- Most recent (within 15 months) AD-435.
- Separate sheet specifically addressing the KSA's identified on the vacancy announcement.
- Any additional documentation or information identified on the vacancy announcement.

Evaluation Process.

The assessment of potential for successful performance in the target position or training opportunity is the primary objective in the evaluation of candidates for selection.

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with ARS' Merit Promotion Plan. Two certificates will be issued for the CEP:

- One for those undertrained applicants with the highest overall ratings of potential for success in the target job.
- One for those applicants who meet the X-118 or X-118C Qualification Standards and are rated best qualified for the position.

Selections.

Selections will be made and processed in accordance with the ARS Merit Promotion Plan.

Training.

Within 30 days after placement of an employee in a CEP position, an ITP (ARS-634) must be prepared. The plan will be designed to assure that the selectee acquires the necessary KSA's for the career field and grade level of the target position. An ITP (ARS-634) may include any part of the following:

- **Developmental Assignments.** Assignments should be chosen to help prepare selectee for the nature and scope of the position he/she is likely to assume, give him/her a broad perspective of the occupational field, and help develop his/her technical skills.
- **Formal Training.** Selectees may participate in academic courses offered at local schools and colleges or government facilities. Courses, relevant to the target position, may be taken during or after working hours at government expense. (Overtime pay for training is not permitted).
- **On-the-Job Training.** The selectee will be assigned responsible and productive work assignments under one or a number of work assignment supervisors.

Before permanent reassignment or promotion to a target position, all trainees must

make up the difference in the qualifications they bring to the Program and the qualifications required by the X-118 or X-118C whether general experience, specialized experience or both. Training time to make up the difference in such qualifications may then be credited at the rate of 1 month of training for 2 months of experience. Time-in-grade restrictions apply for promotion.

Trainees who fail to meet the requirements of their ITP(ARS-634) and the CEP will be reassigned to a position commensurate with their qualifications.

Performance Appraisal.

A Performance Plan must be developed for the selectee no later than 30 days after the employee goes into the position. The Performance Plan should be closely linked to the requirements of the ITP (ARS-634).

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

Personnel Division is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the CEP and assuring its proper administration.
- Ensuring that candidates rated eligible for CEP positions and training possess basic abilities and the potential to perform successfully in the target position.
- Providing technical assistance and guidance to management officials and employees on all aspects of the CEP.
- Maintaining records, suspense systems and statistics required for administration of the Program.

EEO Staff is responsible for:

Providing advice and assistance concerning the establishment and issuance of ARS policies and procedures for CEP to determine that the objectives of the EEO Program are appropriately considered and for continually reviewing the participation of minorities, women, and the disabled.

Supervisors and Management Officials at all levels are responsible for adhering to

merit principles and the principles of EEO, which include the Departmental and ARS commitment to achieving work force diversity, in filling CEP positions.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Restructuring appropriate vacant positions for use in CEP. An especially appropriate time to do this is when preparing the annual ARMPS submission.
- Encouraging employees in their efforts to reach their maximum potential.
- In cooperation with the employee, preparing an ITP (ARS-634) designed to meet the selectee's training, educational and career needs.
- Developing a Performance Plan within 30 days after the selectee is placed in the position.
- Determining that the training and career objectives outlined in the employee's ITP (ARS-634) are being met.
- Counseling the employee on a regular basis, normally as part of the performance review process, in an effort to determine that the requirements of the employee's selection into CEP are being met.

Employees are responsible for:

- Providing personal data requested for various career development segments.
- Participating fully in the preparation of ITPs (ARS-634).
- Striving to successfully complete the requirements of the ITP (ARS-634).
- Actively participating in counseling activities and the individual goal-setting process.

11. PROCEDURES

Selecting Official

- Prepare, sign, and submit SF-52 with the designation that the position should

be filled through the CEP.

- Submit a position description for both the entry level and target positions.
-
- Complete and submit Section I of ARS-368 (see MANUAL 420.1) requesting action under ARS Merit Promotion Plan.

POB

- Authenticate classification decision of title, series, and grade for both the entry level and target positions.
- Select appropriate area of consideration.
- Validate KSA's per instructions in MANUAL 420.1.
- Prepare vacancy announcement in accordance with instructions in MANUAL 420.1 and this DIRECTIVE.
- Receive and date stamp applications.

POB

- Review applications to determine if applicants are eligible.
- Prepare two certificates, using ARS-367 (see MANUAL 420.1): one for the best qualified candidates; and one for those undertrained applicants with the highest overall ratings of potential for success.

Selecting Official

- Review applications, interview, and select or reject candidates. Any candidate on either of the certificates may be selected.
- Within 30 calendar days of the issue date, complete ARS-367 to indicate individual selected and the desired entrance on duty date. Sign and date the form and return it to POB.

NOTE: Certificates may be extended for an additional 30 days with the approval of the servicing staffing specialist, POB.

POB

- Secure employee release from present unit and process position change action.
- Notify all applicants of the outcome.
- Retain fully documented CEP file (see MANUAL 420.1).

Selecting Official

- Within 30 days establish an ITP (ARS-634) and a Performance Official Plan for the selectee.

POB/NSB

- Ensure ITP (ARS-634) provides sufficient developmental assignments for the selectee to meet the qualifications of the target position.
- File a copy of the ITP (ARS-634) in the employee's OPF.

T. J. CLARK
Deputy Administrator
Administrative Management

Exhibits
1 Sample AD-411
2 ARS-634 (Local Reproduction)

DIRECTIVE 413.5

Exhibit 1



United States
Department of
Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Positions are filled by competitive examination under the Civil Service Rules and Regulations, 5 U.S.C. 3301-3306, unless otherwise specified. Positions are filled by competitive examination unless otherwise specified.

POSITION TITLE, SERIES, GRADE:

Building Services Manager, GS-1301-2

USDA, Agricultural Research Service

Washington, DC

PROBATION POTENTIAL: GS-1301-2

LOCATION OF POSITION:

USDA, Agricultural Research Service

Washington Construction Management Division

Greenbelt, Maryland

AREA OF CONSIDERATION:

ARS-WACA, (Washington, DC Local Commuting Area)

ANNOUNCEMENT NO: ARS-PE-00 386

OPENING DATE: August 1, 1991

CLOSING DATE: August 17, 1991

CONTACT:

USDA, ARS, Personnel Division

Personnel Operations Branch

6505 Ivy Lane, Room 105

Greenbelt, Maryland 20770-1435

Telephone Number (301) 344-4337

DEAF-8-VACAN: 301-344-1268

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

DUTIES:

Developmental assistance include obtaining and coordinating the daily operational, cross-functional, interconnected support requirements for a large industrial or manufacturing (M) and contractor staff located in a Federally leased complex. Negotiates changes to the terms and conditions of the real property leases. Coordinates contractor operations for railroad contract, and waste processing services. Coordinates printing/duplicating services, building security, telephone charges, meter pool, and other services for the local complex. Maintains internal inventory records on furnishings related to work space.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

This Program provides for lifetime positions for employees who do and who do not meet the X-110 qualifications requirements for this particular occupational series. Applicants must:

Hold a career or career-conditional appointment, Veteran's Readjustment appointment, or an excepted appointment under the Schedule A appointing authority for the disabled.

Be in a career lateral series position, GS-1 through GS-10 or equivalent.

Have been employed by ARS for at least 90 days of continuous service prior to the announcement closing date.

Applicants may be reassignment, changed to a lower grade, or promoted into the Program. If a move to lower grade is necessary and the selected's pay cannot be accommodated, salary retention applies. Time-in-grade requirements apply to candidates eligible for promotion. The applicant's total experience must give evidence of potential and ability to perform duties of the position at the grade for which an eligible rating is assigned. Candidates who meet X-110 requirements will also be considered.

For separation or transfer purposes, candidate is subject to a probationary period of 180 days of supervised work.

THE USE OF POSTAGE-PAID AGENCY EMPLOYEES IN FILING APPLICATIONS IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW

AR-11-1991

Exhibit 1

Building Services Manager
GS-1101-05

Announcement No.: ARS-H99-999

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Eligible candidates will be evaluated against these KSA's in terms of their background (experience, training, awards, suggestions, performance ratings, etc.) reflected in the applications submitted to determine the best qualified candidates for referral to the selecting official. **SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO EACH KSA IS MANDATORY.**

1. Ability to plan, organize, and coordinate work with other individuals and groups.
2. Ability to analyze data, interpret written materials, and develop solutions to problems.
3. Ability to communicate in writing.
4. Ability to understand administrative functional areas such as procurement and supply, property management, budget and finance, and personnel management.

AGREEMENT REQUIRED:

An Individual Training Plan (ITP) must be developed, monitored, and completed satisfactorily by the selectee. Each assignment will take into consideration the developmental program guidelines and critical job elements when developing and individualized plan for each Program participant. These plans will be based upon the work experience and academic background of the selectee. The Training Agreement allows for intensive accelerated training to be substituted for one half the normal amount of qualification requirements.

TIME PERIOD TO MEET QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Participants must make up the difference in qualifications they bring into the Program and the qualifications required by OPM Handbook X-118 prior to being permanently reassigned or promoted to the target position. The X-118 qualification requirement is 1 year of specialized experience at the next lower grade. Specialized experience is work which is in or directly related to the line of work of the position. Time-in-grade restrictions are not waived. Satisfactory completion of the Program fully qualifies the participant for the target position.

HOW TO APPLY:

Candidates must submit a completed SF-171 (do not include copies of position descriptions), response to KSA's, copy of transcripts, or OPM Form 1170-17, List of College Courses (if applicable), and statement (400 word limit) indicating why you wish to be a participant to the CONTACT address. Indicate the announcement number on your application. Candidates are responsible for presenting their qualifications in sufficient detail to demonstrate that they meet the outlined "ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS" and to document possession of the knowledge, skills, and abilities. A current (within 15 months) performance appraisal is required of current Federal employees. Interim performance appraisals will be accepted from those employees serving in the Federal government for less than 1 year. Applications received without a performance appraisal and response to KSA's will not be given consideration. Applicants must meet all "ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS" and their applications must have been postmarked by the "CLOSING DATE."

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Relocation expenses will not be authorized.

"Use of postage-paid Government agency envelopes to file job applications is a violation of Federal laws and regulations. Applications submitted in postage-paid Government envelopes or via Government FAX machines will not be accepted.

Exhibit 2

ARS Career Enhancement Program

Individual Training Plan_____
Department Name_____
Organizational Unit's AddressARS Career Enhancement Program
Form ARS-413.6-10

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PLAN INSTRUCTIONS

I - GENERAL

- 1 - Enter employee's full name (Last, first, middle initial).
- 2 - Enter present (entry) position title, occupational series and grade.
- 3 - Enter target (next level) position title, occupational series and grade.
- 4 - Enter education completed (include high school and college).
- 5 - Enter previous job titles, occupational series and grades (indicate length of time, or dates of employment).
- 6 - Enter relevant job assignments and dates completed.
- 7 - List all previous developmental activities completed which provided knowledge, skills and abilities for the present job.
- 8 - List all previous training courses completed which provided knowledge, skills and abilities for the current job.

II - ENTRY JOB SPILLS' ANALYSIS

- 9 - List knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the current job. Check whether or not development is needed in each. (If X-118 requirements are met and no development is needed, go on to Part 111.)
 - 9a - For the areas checked in item 9 where development is needed, identify projected on-the-job training assignments and include starting and completion dates.
 - 9b - List any self-developmental activities which will be completed to develop knowledge, skills and abilities identified.
 - 9c - List all formal classroom training that the employee will be required to complete as part of the Career Enhancement Program, including starting and completion dates.

III - TARGETED JOB ANALYSIS

- 10 - List knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the target position. Check whether or not improvement is needed.
 - 10a - List on-the-job assignments which will enable the employee to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities needed, and include projected starting and completion dates for each.
 - 10b - List any self-developmental activities which will be completed by the employee to develop knowledge, skills and abilities needed.
 - 10c - List all formal classroom training the employee will be required to complete which will develop knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the target position, including projected starting and completion dates.

IV - TRAINING AGREEMENT

- 11 - Enter employee's qualifications analysis for the target position and what will be expected. This should be expressed identifying whether or not X-118 qualification standards are met (general and specialized experience). Contact Servicing Staffing Specialist for assistance.
- 12 - ITP Goals:
Entry level - Enter position title and grade of present position and date.
Targeted level - Enter position title and grade of target position and date.
- 13 - List projected date for completion of training plan.

COMMENTS

Add any additional statements in this area which you feel will be pertinent to the accomplishment of this plan.

I - GENERAL

1. Name of Employee	2 Entry Position	13. Target Position
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4. Educational Background

5. Previous Experience

6. Developmental Job Assignments Completed	Date
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7. Developmental Activities Completed	Date
---------------------------------------	------

8. Developmental Training Completed	Date
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II - ENTRY JOB SKILLS ANALYSIS

9.	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required for Present Job	Needs Improvement	Effective
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9a.	On the Job Assignments	Starting Date	Completion Date
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9b.	Self-developmental Activities	Starting Date	Completion Date
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9c.	Formal Classroom Training	Starting Date	Completion Date
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III - TARGETED JOB ANALYSIS

10. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required for Present Job	Needs	
	Improvement	Effective

10 a. On the Job Assignments	Starting	Completion
	Date	Date

10b. Self-developmental Activities	Starting	Completion
	Date	Date

10c. Formal Classroom Training	Starting	Completion
	Date	Date

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IV - TRAINING AGREEMENT

11. Employee Qualifications Evaluation

12. ITP Goals

Entry Level

Targeted Date

Targeted Date

Target Level

13. Duration of Training Plan

14. Comments

15. Signatures

Employee	Date	Supervisor	Date	Staffing Specialist	Date